DEMOCRATIC

GERMAN REPORT

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Election Gains for Anti-War Forces

Germany honours Beethoven

Factory concerts in all parts of the German Democratic Republic were an especial feature of the celebrations of the 125th anniversary of Beethoven's death in the last week of March.

At the great new foundry "Iron Kombinat Ost" being built on the River Oder, a special concert was given for the workers by three leading Soviet musicians, Stalin Prize Holder Lev Oborin, Stalin Prize Holder Svetoslav Knushvitzki, and Vladimir Yampolski.

The concert was introduced by famed composer Dmitri Shostakovitch, who told the steel and constructional workers "It is a particular pleasure for us to play in this great new foundry. The Soviet people watch with great sympathy the struggle of German patriots for the reunification of Germany."

In the Democratic Sector of Berlin more than 40 concerts of Beethoven's music marked the festival week. At the opening ceremony Wilhelm Pieck, President of the German Democratic Republic, was able to greet foreign guests from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Rumania, Denmark, Finland, Austria and Switzerland as well as from the Soviet Union.

"Our special greetings go to our guests from West Germany who have come to the festival in great numbers, although for some of them this means that their jobs and their livelihood are endangered" said Wilhelm Pieck.

"When we honour Beethoven's memory, we are paying a tribute to a great creative personality who belongs not to the German people alone but to all mankind.

"We honour him both as an outstanding artist and as one of the finest pioneers in the struggle for the freedom, unity and independence of his homeland. He was a dauntless fighter for progress, and a great prophet of the brotherhood of man and the reign of peace."

WORKERS UNITY BRINGS VICTORY

United action by Socialists und Communists in the municipal elections in Bavaria, West Germany, ensured important wins for the peace forces.

Most significant single victory was in the city of Nuremberg, formerly notorious for nazi party rallies, where the combined votes of Social Democrats and Communists elected Social Democrat Otto Baernreuther as mayor.

Speaking after his victory the new mayor stated: "The peace proposals made by the Soviet Union provide a real basis. The holding of free democratic elections in the whole of Germany is something which we Germans can well do alone, without a United Nations Commission."

In many other towns and rural areas similar united action by the workers' parties brought victory against right-wing supporters of Adenauer and his policy of war. In the rural district of Voehringen the Communist Joseph Duerr was elected mayor with the help of Socialist votes, and in Roethenbach and Georgensgmuend independent candidates standing on a progressive platform were elected.

Socialist Unity Party Call

The elections, interpreted by observers as a clear rejection of West German remilitarisation, were preceded by a renewed appeal for unity addressed by the Socialist Unity Party in Berlin to the Social Democratic Party in Bonn. The appeal stated in part:

"The Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany proposes to the Board of the Social Democratic Party that they should take united action against the revival of German militarism, in favour of a peace treaty with Germany, and in favour of all-German elections to a National Assembly.

"In view of the concentration of reactionary forces we consider it urgently necessary ... to concentrate all the forces of the Socialist Unity Party, the Social Democratic Party, the Communist Party and the trade unions on creating unity of action by the working class.

"We therefore propose that representatives of the Socialist Unity Party and the Social Democratic Party should meet ... in order to achieve a maximum strengthening of the forces of democracy and peace in Germany."

East German prices down again

Prices for eggs, margarine and stockings were slashed again in the German Democratic Republic in the last week of March, in another move to raise the standard of living.

Eggs and margarine on the free market were both reduced 30 percent, and stockings and socks, previously rationed, came off the ration and were simultaneously reduced in price between 10 and 35 percent according to quality.

Typical price cuts for hosiery were in women's artificial silk stockings from 3.15 marks to 2.38 marks, and children's socks from 2.25 marks to 1.75 marks.

The reductions in egg and margarine prices were reflected in markdowns in restauants, where egg dishes are now about one fourth cheaper.

WHY WAS WEST BERLIN KILLER FREED? See p. 5

ADENAUER'S NEW AXIS

by Dr. Gustav Heineman

It is frightening to see how we in Germany are putting out in the sea of world politics once again, seated in a leaky boat.

A new axis is being forged today. It used to be the Berlin—Rome—Tokio axis, and now it is the Bonn—Washington—Tokio axis, with the help of which we should help to create a new world order.

On March 16th Chancellor Adenauer announced that one of the aims of his policy was the creation of a new order in Europe, and he supported the same Hitlerian thesis at an election meeting in Heidelberg. The camouflage which has hidden Adenauer's policy for so long is now slowly falling.

The projects for a new world order are ripening in this situation. Under the influence of massive American rearmament the Federal German Republic aims to be the European partner of a new axis, as Japan is on the Asiatic side.

On March 9th 1951 the Federal government stated that its aim was the speediest possible reunification of Germany by means of all-German elections. That is no longer its goal.

In the new conception the integration of the Federal Republic in the western community and rearmament are the great aims. That is why on March 11th Adenauer described the Soviet Note on a peace treaty as "insignificant".

The people of West Germany, however, have no desire to make world politics. They are interested in the natural German policy of reuniting the country as quickly as possible.

Acheson and Adenauer are reponsible for the fact that Germany has not yet been reunited. Adenauer intends to achieve the integration of the Federal Republic in the west before doing anything else.

That is the new axis policy with world-wide aims which include the introduction of a "new order" in eastern Europe.

Has the nation realised where the Chancellor is leading us? Do we want to take part in new adventures aimed at bringing a Germanic new order to other peoples?

(Dr Heinemann, author of this article, which appeared in the West German "Aachener Nachrichten" on April 3rd, is a leading member of the West German Christian Democratic Union, and was Minister of the Interior in Adenauer's government until late in 1950 when he resigned in protest against the remilitarisation policy.)

Germans reject western note, demand peace treaty

Germans of all parties have overwhelmingly rejected the western note of reply to the Soviet proposals for a speedy peace treaty with Germany, and have demanded a positive reply. Particularly bitter attacks have been made upon Chancellor Adenauer's policy.

Here are comments from a number of West German newspapers:

Fraenkische Tagespost (Social Democratic):

"For the Chancellor the unity of Germany is just another 'also ran'. His policy offends against the most important national interests, and is simply a continuous provocation of the Soviet Union."

Sueddeutsche Zeitung (Independent):

"The Chancellor has never been so 'western' as in his obstinate insistence on integrating the Federal Republic in the west. He is not worried about the reaction of the German public, but only about the results of the presidential elections in America. His ruling thought is — Eisenhower."

Deutsche Zeitung und Wirtschaftszeitung (Conservative):

"On one side stand the Chancellor and those who regard the partitioning of Germany and the western alliance as an accomplished fact. On the other side are those who have not abandoned hope of reaching an all-German solution.

"To the second group belong a considerable part of the Christian Democratic Union (Adenauer's party, ed.), a number of members of parliament of other middle-class parties, and members of the cabinet.

"Those who are opposed to German unity greeted the western note, but the others were bitter, since they feared that the last chance of reunification had been wrecked."

Soviet proposals make strong appeal

"In Germany today the emotional appeal of reunification, neutrality and peace is a good deal stronger and much more widely shared than the intellectual appeal of such complicated arrangements as the Schuman Plan and the European Defence Community" stated New York Times correspondent Drew Middleton in a dispatch from Bonn on March 29th.

Main points of Western Note

On March 25th the governments of Great Britain, France and the United States replied to the Soviet Note of March 10th proposing an early peace treaty with Germany.

Main points of the Western Note were:

1. An all-German government, based on free elections throughout Germany must precede the conclusion of a peace treaty.

2. "No definitive German frontiers were laid down by the Potsdam decisions."

3. The formation of German national land, air, and sea forces as proposed by the Soviet Union, would be "a step backwards".

4. The western powers give "their full support to plans designed to secure the participation of Germany in a purely defensive European community."

WHAT THEY SAID IN 1945

The Potsdam Agreement, signed on August 2nd 1945 by J. W. Stalin, Harry S. Truman and C. R. Attlee stated:

"The three heads of government agree that, pending the final delimitation of Poland's western frontier, the former German territories east of a line ... (here follows a definition of the present Oder-Neisse frontier) ... shall be under the administration of the Polish state and for such purposes should not be considered as part of the Soviet zone of occupation in Germany."

Mr Winston Churchill, speaking in the House of Commons on February 28th 1945 stated:

"The three powers have now agreed that Poland shall receive substantial accessions of territory both in the north and in the west ... In the west she will receive the important industrial province of Upper Silesia and, in addition, such other territories to the east of the Oder as it may be decided at the peace settlement to detach from Germany ..."

Commenting on this speech the London "Times" stated:

"In making these promises Mr Churchill ... repudiated the argument that their acceptance would expose Poland to a future German war of revenge, because conditions that it has already been decided to impose upon Germany after surrender ... would render it impossible that Germany should recover the capacity of aggression for generations to come."

Germany and Poland must be Friends

by Otto Grotewohl, Prime Minister of the German Democratic Republic

(The month of April is being celebrated throughout East Germany as month of German-Polish Friendship. Here is an extract from an article specially written for the occasion by Otto Grotewohl.)

The frontier on the Oder and Neisse rivers has become a real frontier of peace between Germany and Poland, and no degree of chauvinistic propaganda will ever again be able to break the firm ties of friendship linking the German and the Polish peoples.

In protection of the vital interests of the German people we shall do everything to prevent this frontier, which was laid down by the four great powers, from becoming the cause for a Third World War.

The final delineation of this frontier between Poland and Germany has robbed the American imperialists of their hope of starting war against the Soviet Union and against all peace-loving people by means of provoking a conflict between Germany and Poland.

All those who question the Oder-Neisse frontier conjure up war. All those who recognise the frontier protect and safeguard peace.

The political, economic and cultural agreements reached between the governments of the German Democratic Republic and Poland show what success has already been acheived in friendly cooperation between our countries. The agreements on the exchange of experiences gathered in working out large scale economic plans; on scientific and technical cooperation; on long term trade agreements and cultural agreements; all these things have brought our two peoples closer together than ever before. They have removed the allegedly insurmountable obstacles, which as a matter of fact were artificially created in the past by the ruling imperialist circles in both countries.

Our cooperation is not only of advantage to our peoples, but at the same time strengthens the great world peace movement.

The Polish people are not only our allies and friends, but they are also an example to us. In one hundred years of struggle for national unity the Polish people have developed fine fighting national traditions. The Polish people never abandoned their struggle for national reunification.

In the period of Hitlerite barbarism the Polish people struggled with enormous courage against their oppressors, in the same way that they are now overcoming all obstacles on the path to Socialism.

The American imperialists and their West German agents can increase their campaign of hate against the Polish Republic and the German Democratic Republic, but their efforts are in vain. The German people do not intend to be the victims of a new imperialist world war. They want to build their own houses in peace, they want to live as good neighbours with the Polish people.

"Old hate ended" says Polish delegate

The German and Polish people have finally got rid of the artificially-fostered hate between the two countries, stated Professor Stefan Zolkiewski, head of the Polish delegation to the German Polish Friendship celebrations in Berlin.

Professor Zolkiewski, who is head of the Literary Research Institute in Warsaw, continued:

"In the war the Polish people suffered terribly under Hitler Fascism and the fact that after such a war it was possible to create such a friendship is a great moral victory for humanity.

"The imperialists want to smash this great work of friendship, but this criminal plan, this historical absurdity, can never succeed. The nation which has produced Goethe and Schiller, Heine and Beethoven, Marx and Engels will continue along the path to its proper historic place in the great family of free and peace-loving nations."

WEST BERLIN POLICEMAN CHOOSES PEACE

The West Berlin policeman Guenther Gasch has been granted the right to live and work in the Democratic Sector of Berlin, after leaving his unit in disgust at the military training given.

In an open letter addressed to his former colleagues of the West Berlin Mobile Police Guenther Gasch stated:

"When I joined up I hoped that I would be trained so that I could do my duty helping and protecting the population. The catastrophic economic position in West Berlin had made it impossible for me to continue with my training as a mechanic.

"My eyes were opened by eight weeks of training in the Schulzendorf Barracks. We were not trained as policemen but as legionaries for a civil war.

"On March 31st I decided that I must sever my connections with this police force, and came to the Democratic Sector, where I can take part in the democratic reconstruction of our country. I do not intend to bleed on the battlefields for foreign interests.

"Colleagues! Refuse to become foreign legionaries! You still have time to make the decision, to fight for peace and not for war."

Really Central Heating

The huge new blocks of workers flats going up in the East Berlin Stalin Allee will be centrally heated from one central boiler room.

PEACE TREATY? MEETING BANNED

The following letter, sent by the authorities in Villingen, French Zone, is reprinted without comment.

"County Official's Office
Department II A

Villingen, Black Forest
March 22nd 1952

Subject: Public meeting on 22. 3. 52

According to placards posted a public meeting is planned at 8 p. m. March 22nd in the "Lilie" Inn. Speakers are given as Anton Madlener from Schwenningen, former town councillor and member of the Christian Democratic Union, and the writer Hans Kurth from Tuebingen.

The meeting is described as "a rally of all who want peace", and the title is "Adenauer's policy and the Soviet Russian offer of a peace treaty for the whole of Germany. Not General Treaty, But Peace Treaty". The placard is signed "Federation of all who want peace".

Associations which aim at the conclusion of a peace treaty are banned, according to a decision taken by the Federal Government on 24. 4. 51, and accepted by the government of Baden (Order No. 11,942 of the Ministry of the Interior on 11. 5. 51) (Bad. MBl S. 125), in accordance with Article 9, Paragraph 2 of the Basic Law. The meeting is therefore to be prevented from taking place."

PROFILE

HERMANN ABS — BANKER WITH BLOODY HANDS

A few years ago American Military Police and Army investigators were combing West Germany for a smooth-faced financial magnate with a neat black moustache.

His name, Hermann Abs, was one of the very top ones on their "automatic arrest" lists of leading nazi war criminals.

"Hermann Abs, one of the leading German financiers, who has amassed huge sums under National Socialism" said orientation pamphlet No. 31 110 A issued by the U. S. Department of the Army in spring 1945, when the Pentagon still regarded nazis as enemies, not as allies.

Concentrated Power

Even more specific was the OMGUS Bulletin, issued by the U. S. Office of Military Government in Germany in November 1946, which stated:

"Abs was the guiding spirit of the villainous Deutsche Bank, which combined an unusual concentration of economic power with active collaboration in the criminal policies of the nazi regime. Hermann Abs' Deutsche Bank acted as a top-rank agent of the German government and served the economic penetration of the satellite states and the occupied countries of Europe.

"Abs repaid the advantages granted to him and to his bank by playing an active role in the various organisations and economic committees organised by the nazis.

German Domination

"The Foreign Department of the Deutsche Bank rested in the hands of four men who worked under the supervision of Hermann Abs. He devoted his entire attention to extending German domination through Europe."

But that was written long ago. The U. S. agents did not find Hermann Abs when they were looking for him, because he was already working for the British occupation forces. But even if they had found him and brought him before a war criminals court and sentenced him for his crimes he would be free again today, like his colleague Alfried Krupp von Bohlen.

Today, as head of the West German Reconstruction Bank, and director of some forty of West Germany's biggest companies, war criminal Abs is possibly the most powerful single man in West Germany. What is his history?

As the "bright young man of the financial world", Abs, who was born in Bonn in 1901, first became prominent in 1935 when he became part owner of the Berlin bank of Delbrück-Schickler & Co. At this time he was already director of seven important industrial concerns. In 1938 he became youngest member of the board of the Deutsche Bank, just in time to take full advantage of Hitler's campaign of conquest.

When Hitler's Europe reached its greatest extent in 1942 Abs was sitting pretty as representative of the Deutsche Bank, I. G. Farben, and the Frankfurt Metal Society, occupying no less than 40 posts in the leading heavy industries of Europe, including directorships in looted firms in Austria, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Holland and Luxemburg.

"Council of Gods"

As a member of the infamous "Council of the Gods", as the directors of the great chemical trust I. G. Farben were known, Abs profited directly from the production of "Zyklon" gas, the gas which was used for the extermination of millions of men, women and children in the concentration camps.

Another of his directorships, in the Continental Oil Company, brought him a big share of the loot from the Rumanian, Polish and Caucasian oil fields.

For a real top-flight financial magnate like Abs the war naturally did not mean the end of his international financial connections. At conferences in Madrid with colleagues of the Compania Hispano-Americana de Electricidad and the Venezuelan Railways he kept in contact with his interests in the new world.

Disappearing Act

After the war Abs decided that it would be more tactful to disappear from the public eye for a while, and at the time that American agents were searching for him he was working quietly—as a financial adviser to the British Military Government.

But his "retirement" did not last long. In 1948 he took over the leadership of the "Reconstruction Bank", which distributed Marshall Plan credits, and began to collect directorships again. At last count he was director of at least 43 different big companies in Germany and Western Europe, including Deutsche Shell, Siemens-Halske, Solvay, Zeiss-Ikon, Deutsch-Asiatische Bank, Luxemburg Union Bank, and the huge Frankfurt Metall-Gesellschaft. He is chairman of the board of Badische Anilin, biggest successor to I. G. Farben.

In addition he heads Germany's Foreign Debt Commission which, in the course of long-drawn-out negotiations in London, is making arrangements to pledge the future national income of the German people for the advantage of the German and American financiers.

Abs and the men who surround him are the really determined opponents of German unity and a peaceful world, for they fear, and rightly, that when unity comes they will lose their fat directorships and their bank accounts. In the German Democratic Republic today, and in the united peaceful Germany of tomorrow there is no room for men who become rich on the death and suffering of millions.

Buchenwald Memorial

The site of the former Buchenwald concentration camp near Weimar in East Germany will be made into a memorial to the 50,000 anti-nazis who died there, the International Buchenwald Committee announced. Part of the camp will be planted as a memorial forest, but the gas chamber and punishment block will be retained as a frightful warning.

In West Germany the countryside round the death camp of Belsen, in the British Zone, has been requisitioned for use as a military manouevre ground.

British let nazis go

The British authorities have released two more nazi war criminals from Werl prison. They are Helmut Schlierbach and Gottfried Drossen who were serving long sentences for torturing and murdering allied parachutists and other allied nationals.

S. A. Chief Denazified

The denazification court in Lueneberg, British Zone, has dismissed cases which were pending against Wilhelm Schepmann, former chief of staff of the S. A., the nazi storm troops, and Wilhelm Kepler, S. S. General and former secretary of state in Hitler's Foreign Ministry.

The main denazification court in Munich, American Zone, has dismissed the case against Field Marshal Albert Kesselring, who is serving a life sentence for shooting 300 Italian partisans. Reason given for the dismissal was that there was "no evidence" against the Field Marshal.

WEST BERLIN KILLER FREED

Policeman praised for death blow

A former nazi West Berlin police officer, charged with killing a railway worker, has been released from prison in West Berlin because the man killed is alleged to have been a Communist.

The killing took place on November 7th 1951 in the administration building of the Potsdamer Goods Yard, situated in the British sector of the city. Under four power arrangements, made in 1945 and still in force, all railway installations in all four sectors of Berlin, form part of the railway system of the surrounding area —formerly the Soviet Zone, now the German Democratic Republic.

Hall wrecked

On November 7th, railwaymen of the Potsdamer Goods Yard were just preparing for a concert in honour of the anniversary of the Soviet Revolution, when a troop of West Berlin police, commanded by Inspector Hermann Zunker, a bull-necked, shavenheaded man of 56, came storming onto the premises.

Without waiting to show a warrant the police started to wreck the meeting hall, tearing down posters and banners with such inscriptions as "A Round-Table Conference for All Germans," and "Help West Berlin Children to Have Fine Holidays in the German Democratic Republic."

Ernst Kamieth, an old railwayman, member of no party, even-tempered and called "Papa" by his colleagues, who since the war has been chief of the Potsdamer Goods Yard, came out of his office to see what was going on.

Railwayman hit

Here is what happened next, according to Elisabeth Behrendt, who worked in the next office:

"Kamieth went down the corridor and stood in the open doorway of the club-room. Inspector Zunker had just pulled a red flag down from the wall, and rushed up to Kamieth shouting 'What do you want?' Kamieth replied quietly 'I am in charge here' whereupon Zunker gave him a heavy blow on the head, shouting 'Now get out.'

"About 10 or 15 minutes later Kamieth lost consciousness, and we got the stretcher out and had him taken to hospital."

Ernst Kamieth was unconscious when he reached the hospital, and died soon afterwards without recovering consciousness.

A post-mortem report, made by Professor Anders, one of Germany's leading experts, stated "that there can be no doubt that the blow ... must be regarded as responsible for the bleeding of the brain, and thus for the death."

Introducing Zunker

Who is this Inspector Zunker?

This bull of a man, six foot tall and broad in proportion, has been a policeman for the past thirty years, and many Berlin workers remember him well from the period before 1933, when he used to take a particular pleasure in breaking up demonstrations and batoning workers.

After Hitler came to power he remained in the police force, and during the war took part in the looting of Soviet villages as a member of the field gendarmerie.

After the war Zunker and his family took up a career of black-marketeering. In July 1948 the police in the East Sector of Berlin arrested his wife and his son on black-marketeering charges, but Zunker saved himself by fleeing to the West Sectors.

The letter reproduced on this page shows that Zunker had influential friends in American military government.

As a result of this letter he was immediately reinstated in the police, and since then has become notorious in the suppression of the peace movement and all progressive movements in West Berlin.

On November 8th 1951, the day after the killing of Ernst Kamieth, a member of the trade union committee of the Potsdamer Goods Yard telephoned Zunker in his police station, and the following conversation ensued:

Unionist: *Herr Zunker, we learn from the press that you deny having struck the blow which killed Kamieth. Everybody here saw you strike the blow, however. What is your attitude towards the affair?*

Zunker: *If you will come round to the station we can talk the whole thing over.*

Unionist: *No, it is too urgent, all our union members want to know what you have to say.*

Zunker: *You are the murderers, not me. I do not admit anything. You bastard, you filthy swine, you just come round to the station and I will talk to you in a language which you understand. We shall hang the whole lot of you, you blasted bunch of pimps.*

The West Berlin press made frantic and confused attempts to

OFFICE OF MILITARY GOVERNMENT
BERLIN SECTOR

Public Safety Branch

Berlin, Germany
APO 742-A, US Army
19 July 1948

SUBJECT: Inspector Hermann ZUNKER, born 5 July 1895, residing at 11 Ruhmeweg, Berlin-Zehlendorf

TO : Kommando of Schutzpolizei, Personnel Office

THRU : Sector Assistant

You are directed to hire Inspector Hermann ZUNKER (see above) immediately for the Schutzpolizei and to assign him to the US Sector. Inspector Zunker is to be employed with his former rank.

FOR THE DIRECTOR:

CHARLES C. SOND
Chief Police Section

Killer Freed (from p. 5)

hush up the news of the killing. On November 12th the official American organ "Neue Zeitung" stated:

"West Berlin police declared on Thursday that not a single policeman was on the Potsdamer Goods Yard on November 7th. As a point of fact Kamieth was involved in a fight with other railwaymen in the course of which he received a blow which led to his death."

The British controlled "Welt am Sonntag" stated however on November 11th:

"In the course of dispersing a Communist meeting a railwayman who resisted the police was fatally injured."

Three weeks later the West Berlin press was forced to admit the falsity of their earlier stories. The French controlled "Kurier" reported on December 3rd:

"After a month of investigations it turns out that Zunker hit Kamieth on November 7th after all. The police have known the truth for some time, but have hushed it up."

Finally, on Friday January 11th, under the pressure of public opinion, Zunker was arrested on a charge of manslaughter.

Indignant officials of American military government went into action, and the leadership of the West Berlin Social Democratic Party introduced a motion in the West Berlin City Council calling for his immediate release. This motion stated in part:

"We regard it as contrary to the constitution that Police Officer Zunker should be held under arrest for an injury alleged to have been inflicted in defence against Communist attacks. The Council is requested to lay down clear lines of conduct for the police in resisting totalitarian provocation."

As a result of this high power pressure, Zunker was released on March 21st, and is free again to continue his career of crime and terror.

Western statistics prove East German workers more prosperous, rich poorer

A working class family in the German Democratic Republic can buy as much for 98 marks as a family in West Berlin can buy for 100 marks, according to statistics published by the West Berlin "Institute for Economic Investigation" on March 28th.

The actual position for a working class family is much more favourable than the Institute indicates, since wages are higher in the German Democratic Republic, social services better and more comprehensive, and educational facilities far in advance of those available to workers' children in West Berlin. In addition there is no unemployment in East Germany, while one out of every three workers in West Berlin is on the dole.

The West Berlin statistics show in addition that rich people in West Germany are better off than their East German colleagues. According to the Institute's figures, a well-to-do family pays 144 marks for goods which cost only 100 marks in West Germany.

Reason for this difference is that luxury goods are priced very high in the German Democratic Republic, since main attention is still devoted to producing essential commodities at prices which everybody can afford.

Prisoners to do essential work

Persons serving prison sentences will be allowed in future to work on projects particularly important for the economy, the cabinet of the German Democratic Republic has decreed.

Only prisoners who themselves apply will be given such work, and they will be paid at the full rate for the job. In addition two working days will be equivalent to three days of sentence, and prisoners who do exemplary work may win a remission of up to one year.

All laws relating to working conditions, holiday pay etc., will apply without restriction to prisoners engaged on essential work.

Since there is no unemployment and no danger of unemployment in the German Democratic Republic, and since full wages will be paid, workers have greeted the new order as a contribution to the work of reconstruction.

SPECIAL OFFER TO BRITISH READERS

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Then give him a trial subscription at the special rate of 2/6 for six months.

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E. German miners lead on pensions, sick-pay

Miners in the German Democratic Republic have far better social services than miners in West Germany, according to figures reported to the International Labour Office, Geneva.

Here are some comparative figures. A West German miner can draw sick pay for a maximum of 26 weeks at a top figure of 6.25 marks daily. The East German miner can get up to 14.80 marks daily for 52 weeks.

In cases of hospitalisation, a West German miner's family gets between one third and one half of the miner's earnings for six months. In East Germany the period is a year and may be extended under certain circumstances.

Pensions from the Miners' provident funds are paid in West Germany at the age of 65. In the German Democratic Republic miners draw full pensions at the age of sixty, and are entitled to draw it at any time after reaching the age of 50 if they have worked in the trade for 25 years.

Nazi official relieved of post

Public protest against the employment of hundreds of former nazis in the West German Foreign Ministry has forced Chancellor Adenauer to suspend from duty Werner von Bargen, Minister for Special Duties in the Legal Department of the Ministry.

During the war von Bargen was attached to nazi military government in Belgium. Details of the part he played in the massacre of Jews were given by GERMAN REPORT on March 28th, page 5.

Citizens counter airfield plans

The citizens of Freiburg in the French Zone of West Germany have won a complete victory in their struggle against the construction of a new military airfield on the outskirts of the town.

The town council, supported by the overwhelming majority of the population, decided at the end of January to oppose the airfield plans with a passive resistance campaign. Lord Mayor Hoffmann informed the French authorities that the town council would feel it was neglecting a sacred duty if it allowed an airfield to be built on the site planned.

The French Commissioner for South Baden has now informed the town council that the plan has been abandoned.

Tents for Pioneers

Thirty-eight new tent encampments for Young Pioneers will be erected in the German Democratic Republic in time for the summer holidays. The government has earmarked the sum of 1,845,000 marks for these camps.

Readers' Letters

Women in Mines?

"The magazine 'Labour' issued by the British Trade Union Congress stated in its December issue that in East Germany women were being sent to work in the mines again. 'Not only is the official ban lifted, there is encouragement for women to earn their living in the mines, the magazine stated. What is the true position?"

J. W. London, England.

Here is the answer to this question in quotations from some of the laws of the German Democratic Republic. The Law on the Equal Rights of Women, passed on September 27th 1950, which guaranteed equal pay and equal legal status, as well as special privileges for mothers, stated in paragraph 19:

"Women's work in industry should not be confined to the traditional branches, but extended to all trades ... Work conditions must be adapted to women's physique."

One month later the Law on the Protection of Labour was passed by the parliament of the German Democratic Republic. Schedule 2 to paragraph 20 of this law stated:

"List of trades in which the employment of women is prohibited, or only allowed when the production technique in the shop has reached such a level that the health of the women employed is not endangered:

1) Heavy manual jobs involving weights exceeding 15 kilogrammes (33 lbs) ...
2) In mining operations underground, work as hewer, loader, ... work with compressed air tools ... work where there is silicosis danger, work where temperatures exceed 24° Centigrade (75° Fahrenheit) ..."

These two laws show that while women are encouraged to enter new jobs, there is a direct ban on jobs which could endanger their health. Women themselves have played a leading part in the struggle to be allowed to take on all sorts of jobs, and they point out that in modern fully mechanised mines conditions for some sorts of work are at least as good as in many factories and shops above ground.

Plastic Cars

"East Germany is now making plastic automobile bodies, GERMAN REPORT stated on February 15th. I should like to know more about this."

S. L., Detroit U. S. A.

Here is your answer, by Kurt Lang, chief of the Central Vehicle Construction Administration:

Experiments in making car bodies of plastics have been frequent in the past twenty years. Main advantages of a plastic body over a sheet metal body would be

1) good insulation
2) good sound absorption
3) resistance to corrosion
4) light weight.

In addition, the colour can be an integral part of the plastic substance, instead of having to be sprayed on.

The shortage of sheet steel in the German Democratic Republic forced us to speed up our experiments in this field.

Shortages in supplies of phenol, kresol and formaldehyde, however, prevented the use of plastics in which they were the basis.

We therefore had to turn to thermoplastics, which have been considered in the past as unsuitable, since they have poor temperature characteristics.

Early in 1951 the research department of the IFA car works got down to serious work on the task. After six weeks intensive labour, on May 1st 1951, the first car was fitted with a trial plastic body. Not only the body but also the wings and the bonnet were of plastic. Since that date the car has been almost constantly on trial. Uncared for, left standing in frost and sun, rushed from sub-zero temperatures to tropic heat in testing rooms, spattered with oil, doused in water, the bodywork has come through with flying colours.

In the next few months a large number of cars will give the new bodies their large scale test, before they go onto the production line.

Apart from car bodies we expect to use the new plastic for carriage-work on railway coaches and on steamers.

Bouquets

"May I congratulate you on your excellent publication. The items I liked best were as follows: Berlin Notebook, Extracts from New York Times, Duesseldorf City Council notices."

Cyril R. Holloway
51 Comyn Rd
Battersea, London, England

"You are doing a wonderful job in producing GERMAN REPORT and may I wish you the very best of luck"

John Cartwright
60 Frinton Rd
Broxtowe, Nottingham
England

"I was very glad to get in my last batch of mail a copy of GERMAN REPORT which I found highly interesting ... I will remain here until we have secured a cease-fire."

W. G. Burchett
"Ce Soir" Correspondent
Kaesong, Korea

Brickbats

"I have been receiving copies of your propaganda paper which I fear is wasted on me. I am trying hard to forget everything that reminds me of Germany, and am personally opposed to fighting a war again either against or alongside German soldiers on either side. Be good enough to take me off your mailing list."

W. D. Feist
3734 Cote St. Catherine Rd
Montreal, Canada

"Please leave us off your mailing list."

Evangeline Burgess
Pacific Oaks Friends School
Pasadena 2, California U. S. A.

"Your paper does not appeal to any disinterested person ... kindly remove my name from your mailing list."

Roger Baldwin
American Civil Liberties Union
170 Fifth Avenue, New York

"Your report is only an addition to publications that I have no time to read. I should be glad not to receive it."

Sidney Harrison
17 Kinnaird Avenue
London W. 4. England

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BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

I was just in the middle of washing-up some dishes this morning, when the door-bell rang. It was the post-woman, but she had not only brought me my mail. She wanted to know if I would be willing to come round to the post-office late some afternoon and give a lecture. I could choose a subject myself, she said, but her colleagues were particularly interested in the attitude of the British people to the rearmament of West Germany.

Thirst to Learn

"They cannot understand how the English people allow their government to give arms back to the nazis" she said.

The request was typical of the thirst for knowledge, for schooling and courses, for lectures and serious reading in East Germany today.

"He is off on a course" is one of the commonest answers when you ask where someone is, and those who cannot spare the time to attend a full-time course are generally doing part-time study.

(Before going any further I had better explain about the washing-up mentioned above. This is not a particularly clever form of "red terror" practiced against bachelors, but simply the result of the fact that the old lady who generally cleans and washes for me has flu. Today I had reached the last of my stock of clean cups, and had to do some washing before I could eat breakfast.)

Painful gap

There are many reasons for this urge to learn. Twelve years of nazi barbarism has left a painful gap in the knowledge of the young generation, for one thing. Even more important is the fact that the ending of the power of the nazi industrialists and the big landowners throughout East Germany has thrown big new responsibilities on many hundreds of thousands of people. They find that in order to do their new jobs well they must study, both technically and generally.

I must admit that I thought my schoolroom days had ended long ago, but being a journalist in a country which is being reborn imposes its responsibilities just like any other job. That is why, together with thousands of other Berliners, I sit down for three hours twice a week and study.

We attend lectures on history, on economics, political theory, and philosophy. I find not only the lessons but also my fellow students highly interesting. Liveliest and one of the best read of all the students among the twenty in the study circle which I attend is a fifty-year-old woman railway-worker, a former cleaner who is now in charge of adult education at a whole string of Berlin stations.

Other students are young office-workers, a People's Policeman, a mechanic, and a professor of geology.

But such evening courses are only a small part of the work of learning. All universities for instance have Workers' and Peasants' Faculties attached to them. Here young men and women, who only attended school up to the age of 14, now have a chance to make up for the lost chance, to matriculate, and go on to normal university courses to qualify as engineers, as agriculturalists, as teachers and professors.

"They are some of the keenest students I have ever seen" one of their instructors told me. "Before getting a chance to come here most of them worked for years in a factory or on a farm, and they realise what a great chance study gives them."

Seven years ago

I was sitting last week in the East Berlin Press Club with a Bulgarian colleague, a happy, charming girl whom you would never guess had spent three years of her life in Ravensbrueck Concentration Camp, most of them working in the morgue.

She suddenly went white and gripped the arm of her chair, and following her eyes, I saw that the arm of a raincoat had been caught in the door and was swinging there.

"That is a sight which always makes me feel sick" she said. I urged her to tell me why.

"It was in Ravensbrueck, when they were gassing the children" she said simply. "To save time, and gas, they always pushed them into the gas-vans until they were bursting full. One day a little girl went on waving to her mother, who had to watch the execution, right up to the last minute, and her arm was caught in the door.

New gas chambers?

"The SS man could not close the door, his officer shouted at him, and he got flustered, so he simply pulled his bayonet and hacked off the arm. I saw it happening. Since then I cannot bear to see sleeves and belts caught in doors.

"And some of your countrymen want to put bayonets, and germ bombs and gas chambers back into the hands of people who did that sort of thing."

Goodbye to Isherwood

Many years ago Christopher Isherwood, after a spell of teaching English in pre-Hitler Berlin, sat down, and wrote a book about it. "Goodbye to Berlin" was not an important book, it dealt mainly with the spivs and assorted flotsam to be found in any great western city, but it was amusing and readable.

Twenty years later Mr Isherwood has come back to Berlin again, and in the London "Observer" of March 23rd he picked up apparently just where he had left off.

"Evening after evening, I left the hotel and wandered from bar to bar, over-stimulated and sleepless. Berlin's night-life has kept much of its old character."

That is a typical quotation from a long article full of the silliest warmed-up stories of air-raids and rape. Mr. Isherwood was so busy on his trip from bar to bar that he apparently had no time to visit the democratic sector of the city, where things are really happening, where a new Berlin and a new life is being built out of the ruins.

But despite everything, he met a factory operative somewhere, and the factory operative told him something interesting:

"Of course we want the Russians to get out" he said, "and the Americans, the British and the French too, but all on the same day. We're Germans first of all, and we are sick of fighting each other."

Onward Pegler!

I cannot resist quoting the following extract from a "poem" by Westbrook Pegler, star columnist of the U.S. Hearst papers, written on his return from a trip to Europe:

"It sure has been a thrill to see the
Stars and Stripes so brave
From London down to Naples and
upon the briny wave
Teaching the backward peoples of
the olden world to be
Intelligent and tolerant and noble,
just like we . . .
So onward billions! On billions!
Conquer All!"

After reading these modest lines, one can almost find something good to say for Hitler. He at least did not write verse.

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